I Will Always Need You

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"The quiet gloom of the empty house is making his skin crawl, and he’s filled with an overpowering longing, an intense, forceful need not to be alone. He needs someone.

He needs Eddie."

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Author's Note:

> It really has been an experience writing for this fandom. I'm not used to getting this much love for my fics. I'm always happy to know that there's even one person out there who likes what I've written, but the response I've gotten for my Reddie fics has been absolutely amazing. Thank you all, and hope you like this one as well!

The dream is a confused jumble of images rolling around in his head like clothes in a washing machine. Balloons. Missing posters. Claws and teeth. Henry Bowers. The smell of sewer and blood. The voices of his friends. He's alone. Where are they? Where are his friends? Eddie! Where's Eddie?! His friends are screaming. They're hurt. He can't find them. One by one, their voices grow silent. He can hear Eddie, calling to him for help. Where? Where? Then Eddie too grows silent.

And then the voice.

"Beep-beep, Richie. They're all mine now. Eddie, too. They float now. Don't you want to float, too? Or would you rather be aaaaallll alone? You'll never see your friends again. And sweet little Eds will never know… Come! Come float with your friends, Richie!"

Richie wakes up, his eyes darting around in a cold dread. Gradually, he begins to realize that he's in his own bedroom. As his shivering subsides, he slumps back on the bed, rubbing away the wetness in his eyes with his fingers. He snatches his glasses from the bedside table and glances at the alarm clock. Almost seven pm. He'd only meant to lie down for an hour or so but he's slept three. Three hours of nightmares. But he supposes that's better than not sleeping at all. In the days following the horrors in the sewers it's been hard to get even a wink, and what little he does sleep is restless and worried.

The house is silent. He slips out of his room towards the kitchen. No one home. His parents are out. He makes himself a sandwich, which he eats slowly at the kitchen table. The quiet gloom of the empty

house is making his skin crawl, and he's filled with an overpowering longing, an intense, forceful need not to be alone. He needs someone.

He needs Eddie.

Yes. He wants to see Eddie, right now. Needs to see his face, hear his voice. He leaves the house, locks the front door and jumps on his bike, riding it as fast as he can to Eddie's house. On the corner of Eddie's street he stops, looking towards the Kaspbrak residence, suddenly hesitant to go up there. Mrs K is probably home. He knows Eddie has been breaking his mother's fierce hold on him, but it's a slow process. What if Richie makes it worse for Eddie by showing up? Out of all of Eddie's friends, Sonia Kaspbrak hates Richie the most. Even more than Beverly, and she *really* hates Beverly.

Richie stands there, wondering if perhaps he should throw pebbles at Eddie's window, or maybe just go back home after all, when the door opens and Mrs K appears. She looks a little tidier than usual. She turns in the door, yells something into the house, and Richie can faintly hear Eddie's voice answering. Then she gets in her car and drives away. Grinning at his luck, Richie approaches the house. He locks his bike and rings the bell. He hears steps approaching the door, and then Eddie's face appears.

"Richie?"

He looks surprised, but not displeased. He steps back and lets Richie come in.

"Evening, Eddie Spaghetti. Sorry for just showing up, I was worried I'd get you in trouble, but I saw your mom leaving."

"Yeah, her friend Eleanor Dunton invited her over. They're probably gonna drink wine and eat fancy cheeses or something, so she won't be back for a few hours at least." Eddie gives Richie a worried look. "Are you okay? You look…"

"…like shit, yeah," Richie replies, laughing tiredly, running a hand through his hair. "I kinda been having some trouble sleeping."

Eddie smiles faintly.

”Yeah. Me too.”

Richie sighs, sticks a finger under his glasses, rubbing his tired eyes. Part of him wants to crack jokes, because humor is the most effective shield he has, but… he’s just too tired. He follows Eddie to his room, sitting down next him on the bed.

”I’m just so fucking exhausted. I want to stop thinking about it. I just want one night where I don’t think about it but… it’s always fucking there. And I know that we won, and that we’re safe - for now, at least. But I’m just so…”

He doesn’t finish the sentence. He doesn’t have to. Eddie puts a hand on his shoulder.

”I know,” he says. ”It’s the same for me, and probably for the others. And that’s not so surprising, is it? We just fought a fucking monster. It’s probably going to be like this for a while. But… at least we’ve got each other.”

Eddie smiles, and rubs Richie’s shoulder with his hand.

”Look, since you’re here, why don’t we do something fun to take our minds off it? We could watch a movie, or…”

Eddie had been about to get up from the bed, when Richie grabs the hand resting on his shoulder. He turns to look at Eddie, a faint smile on his lips.

And then he falls apart.

His body shakes, and he’s sobbing hard, tears streaming down his face. Eddie throws his arms around him, and he feels Richie rest his face in the crook of his neck, and then Eddie is crying too, tears spilling into the other boy’s dark hair as they hold onto each other for dear life.

Neither of them can tell how long they sit there holding each other. It feels like an eternity. Eventually, the sobs grow calmer and the tears stop flowing. There’s a feeling of relief, of lightness, in both of them.

They let go of each other, and Eddie grabs tissues for them to clean up their messy faces with. Richie takes off his glasses to dry his eyes. He looks up at Eddie, meeting his gaze. There's something about the look in his eyes that makes Eddie's heart skip a beat, and then Richie's lips are suddenly on his and his heart starts beating double time. It's his first kiss, and it's with the boy he loves so, so much, and the thought makes him so happy that he almost wants to cry again. He feels Richie's hand on his cheek, dry and warm, and then he realizes that he's not kissing back so he begins to respond to the kiss, meeting Richie's lips, moving his own against them. Richie makes a little happy sound, deep in his throat, and pulls him closer.

"I wanted to tell you sooner," Richie whispers. "I just didn't know how… I was scared that you wouldn't…"

"I know. Me too. I didn't think you would ever like me like this."

Richie holds Eddie tighter. He can feel the other boy's warm breath against the side of his neck and his ear.

"Don't ever disappear on me, Eds," he says, his voice soft and faint.

"I won't," Eddie promises, "but don't call me Eds."

They lie back on the bed, kissing sweetly for some time, slowly learning how. Eleanor Dunton calls to let Eddie know that Sonia has had too much wine and will stay on their couch tonight. Eddie thanks her, hangs up and lies down next to Richie again, pulling a blanket over them. He pulls Richie close, letting the other boy rest his head on his chest and tells him his mother won't be back tonight.

"Sleep," he whispers, caressing Richie's hair. "It's okay."

And as the two boys begin drift off, arms around each other, for the first time since they crawled out of the sewers, they know that they will be able to rest easy tonight. Neither of them are afraid to close their eyes.

They are together.

They are safe.